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ASSOCIATION OF
AMERICAN RAILROADS
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1981 RAIL TRAFFIC SEEN AS CLOSE TO 1980's RECORD LEVEL

WASHINGTON, January 4, 1982 -- Freight traffic on major U.S. railroads during 1981 totaled an estimated 915 billion ton-miles, only 0.4 percent lower than the 1980 record of 919 billion, the Association of American Railroads reported today.

Quarterly gains over 1980 were recorded in the first and third quarters when ton-miles were up 1.5 percent and 2.3 percent, respectively. The impact of the United Mine Workers' strike contributed to a decline of 2.1 percent in the second quarter. Preliminary estimates for the fourth quarter of 1981 indicate a drop of 3.3 percent from the previous year's output, a reflection of the economic downturn. The ton-mile decline in the final quarter of 1981 would have been substantially greater had it not been for heavy coal movements.

Ton-miles for the year increased 0.9 percent in the West, but were down 3.6 percent in the East and 0.6 percent in the South.

Carloadings for the year totaled 21,618,093, 4.3 percent below 1980. The lesser decline in ton-miles than in carloadings stemmed from a continuation of the trend toward the retirement of smaller cars -- with the resulting increases in average load per car -- and

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longer average hauls (particularly in Western coal movements). Sixteen of the 21 major commodity groups were down from 1980.

Despite the lengthy United Mine Workers' strike, coal loadings in 1981 reached the highest level since 1957 and posted a 1.0 percent gain over 1980. Other major commodities recording gains over 1980 were coke, up 19.6 percent, and metallic ores, up 8.6 percent.

Grain mill products was the biggest loser, down 16.0 percent, and seven other commodity groups declined by more than 10 percent, including grain which was 14.1 percent lower than 1980.

Ton-miles for the holiday week ended December 26 totaled 11.4 billion, 8.9 percent below the corresponding week of 1980. Carloadings were 11.1 percent lower than the previous year, and 33.5 percent below the preceding non-holiday week of 1981.

Piggyback

Piggyback revenue traffic for the week ended December 19 totaled 34,485 cars, up 1.0 percent from the corresponding week of 1980. Cumulative volume for the first 51 weeks of 1981 reached 1,680,754 cars, 2.5 percent over 1980.

Trailers and/or containers loaded totaled 63,704 in the December 19 week, up 2.6 percent from 1980. The cumulative total was 3,060,239, a 2.8 percent increase over 1980.

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Following are carloadings of major railroads, by commodity groups, for the week ended 12/26/81:

	Loadings in Week ended December 26, 1981		Change from Corresponding Week 1980			Change from Preceding Week	
	Cars		Cars	Percent		Cars	Percent
Grain	16,589	D	4,141	20.0	D	6,750	28.9
Other farm products	3,354	D	284	7.8	D	1,190	26.2
Metallic ores	15,734	D	6,827	30.3	D	6,949	30.6
Coal	79,867	I	6,961	9.5	D	42,257	34.6
Crushed stone, gravel and sand	4,281	D	1,096	20.4	D	3,650	46.0
Nonmetallic minerals	6,949	D	4,094	37.1	D	4,539	39.5
Grain mill products	9,313	D	2,376	20.3	D	3,219	25.7
Food and kindred products	10,131	D	813	7.4	D	3,962	28.1
Primary forest products	6,774	D	1,933	22.2	D	7,969	54.1
Lumber and wood products except furniture	3,883	D	1,252	24.4	D	2,282	37.0
Pulp, paper and allied products	12,257	D	922	7.0	D	5,525	31.1
Chemicals and allied products	17,485	D	4,636	21.0	D	4,527	20.6
Petroleum products	3,525	D	747	17.5	D	1,643	31.8
Stone, clay and glass products	6,889	D	2,105	23.4	D	2,609	27.5
Coke	4,190	D	639	13.2	D	1,094	20.7
Metals and products	7,813	D	3,347	30.0	D	3,793	32.7
Motor vehicles and equipment	8,308	D	1,856	18.3	D	4,925	37.2
Waste and scrap materials	4,920	D	3,071	38.4	D	3,637	42.5
Forwarder and shipper association traffic	5,865	D	650	10.0	D	2,967	33.6
All other carloads	26,332	I	2,193	9.1	D	14,800	36.0
LCL traffic	117	D	25	17.6	D	48	29.1
Total Cars Loaded	254,576	D	31,660	11.1	D	128,335	33.5
Corresponding week of 1980	286,236						

	1981	1980	% Change	
Total Cars Loaded (52 weeks)	21,618,093	22,597,816	D	4.3
Estimated revenue ton-miles (in billions):				
51 Weeks cumulative	903.6	906.1	D	0.3
Week ended December 26	11.4	12.5	D	8.9
52 Weeks cumulative	915.0	918.6	D	0.4

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